

# Mohegan Pequot Model Railroad

<http://www.mprr.org>



## The News for: December 2003

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### **DUES ARE DUE!**

Club dues for 2004 are due by January 1<sup>st</sup>. Payment should be sent or given to the Secretary, mailing address 17 Robin Hill Road, Waterford, CT 06385. Please make checks payable to "M-P Model Railroad Club".

For family membership, all family members must be listed (to receive benefits).

### Springfield

Members wanting free passes must have their dues paid by January 11, 2004. There will be no exceptions and no freeloading.

### **Good news! Clark is back!**

The January Newsletter will be edited by Clark again. Please send contributions to Clark at [modlrrnews@aol.com](mailto:modlrrnews@aol.com), although any sent to me I will forward. Bill E. says the Newsletter is getting "heavier" and more expensive to snail-mail. **We need more email addresses of people willing to receive the Newsletter electronically.**

### **Passenger Modules Status**

The control panel will be set up in our New London Holiday site, to expedite construction.

### **November Club Meeting Notes**

#### Holiday Layout

An agreement has been reached with the New London Mall to use an empty shop diagonally across from ShopRite.

Dan and Stu have checked it out and it is doable, although at 16' x 100' it is an unusual shape. Reportedly the Fire Marshall will allow 3' aisles on either side, or a single 5' aisle on one side, which can just be done. Bob M. will see if a small G-scale layout can be set up; N-scale is unknown.

We need advertising; the media should be interested as we will not charge for entrance, although there will be a donation box. As before, the public will be free to bring trains (of an appropriate gauge!) and try them out.

It is planned to open at weekends 10 AM to 4 PM on December 13, 14, 20, 21, 26, 27, 28, January 3, 4, 10, 11, and Thursdays 6 to 9 PM on December 11, 18, January 8. Dan will draw up a roster. Hopefully we can leave our modules there until ready to load for Springfield.

## Connecticut Eastern Railroad Museum

The show will be at Willimantic Middle School (not the previous venue), 123 Quarry Street, December 7, 10 AM to 3 PM. Setup will be Saturday 5 PM. Area available is unknown. Break down will commence on Sunday with the aim of setting up in New London by Thursday.

Get onto Route 32 through Willimantic Main Street, either from Route 2 or Route 6 and turn onto Mansfield Avenue (across the street from CVS). After Windham Hospital, go left on Quarry Street.

## Meeting Format

Dan wants to change our meeting format so that the first meeting of the month will be interactive clinics, videos, and the like. The second meeting will be a business meeting. Dan will start the ball rolling on December 14 with a clinic on aging<sup>1</sup>.

## Digital Command Control

Dan asserts that a complete change to DCC is too great to be considered. We will, however, promote DCC in several ways. Ed B. and John W. are most active in this arena.

## Club Name and Image

There was much discussion about the Club name, mission, attracting new (younger) membership, encouraging “sleeping” members, and how all this affects our image. Unless something is done, the Club is in real danger of petering out. All Club members are encouraged to tell Dan what you believe we should do. Any decisions will not be taken for several months yet.

## Essex and Thomas the Tank Engine

The raffles and donations realized \$1317.24

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<sup>1</sup> Which won't apply to many of our Club members.

## Meeting Dates

December 14, 28, January 11, 25.

## Field Trips

Dan is doing a very very long trip story.

## Member News

Bert Beukelaer is at home and is feeling better every day, having just had his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. Keep it up Bert!!

## John Waller's Column

Operating our HO scale layout during the two weekends of Thomas the Tank Engine at Essex has to be quite different to any other show or display that we take part in or organize. If nothing else, in view of the revenue we earn, Thomas has become an important event.

The train comes in and hordes of children descend from the station. They start by going next door, where the children have hands-on experience with various Thomas stuff. Naturally, they expect the same when they come in to our display, and need to be greatly restrained by parents, grandparents, guardians, and so on. Unfortunately, our present plexiglass height puts it at exactly the right level for a child to hang onto the top.

One parent asked whether we provided milk crates, and another recommended that we lower our module level to two-year-old height. I responded to the former by saying that we had tried milk crates, and the result was chaos. Why was this so?

Apart from squabbling over milk crates and positions thereon, the adult is relieved of the requirement to lift the child to viewing level, so that the child is less restrained and freer to wreak havoc. I believe the result would be similar if module levels were lowered.

It is easy, in a fixed layout, to build (plexi)glass boundaries which provide complete isolation between the layout and the viewers. Examples of this, which I have seen, are at the Strasburg Museum, and the National Railway Museum at York, England. If our HO layout was always the same, we might be able to make our plexiglass barriers more impervious to little fingers. Since we always change the HO layout, it might be more difficult.

As before, boys were in the majority, although I have to say that girls seem more inclined to deliberately cause train wrecks than boys. It is the boys who seem to object more when dragged away from our display. Mothers seem to be the most long suffering; one very unhappy-looking and very pregnant mother almost seemed to be saying: "I pray that it is a girl!", although these days is probably saying: "and to think I am carrying another boy. I can't stand the thought of yet more trains!"

This time at Thomas there was a petting zoo. So that set me thinking we might be able to have a "petting train table". We could take one or more of our "retired" modules (which we have not figured out what to do with anyway), donate some old cars (and I have some "toy" cars which could be used), and let the children have at it. Of course the module(s) would need to be mounted at about half its/their present height, and would need to be constrained so that one or more children could not tip the modules over.

I mentioned it a couple of other members, who thought it could be a neat idea, although we would need to consider whether it would make the whole children situation worse. Certainly, such a facility would need to be continuously and closely supervised by at least one, and preferably two, Club members. We did not have enough members present this time to be able to do that.

*John*

## The President's Corner<sup>2</sup>

I'm glad my article in the [previous] Newsletter has sparked a lot of thoughts, as well as enthusiasm for change. First off, I think we should try not to be too negative while venting and discussing issues within the club. We still have a lot of things going for us, the least of which is that we are still a strong, well respected and well liked club. We have not lost this yet, but I strongly believe we need to change with the times to ensure a strong future for the club. The club has been a large part of my life, be it the countless hours of father son bonding I had with my old man, the friendships I have developed with a lot of you guys, and the enjoyment of sharing in the common interest of railroading. Some day, I will have a wife and children, and I look forward to the day when I can bring my kids along to have them share in this great hobby with me, and in the club that I have enjoyed for so many years. With hindsight being 20/20, part of me is glad the club show didn't go well, because the dismal results have invigorated me and motivated me to really get some things done. My youthful enthusiasm has returned. Had things gone OK, we wouldn't be thinking of the future the way we are now. (Of course, it would have been nice to have made lots of money and had all these realizations, but realistically both would not have happened) I have decided to change the meeting format to include a business meeting the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday, and less formal activity meeting the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday. I think this will be more enjoyable and foster much more enthusiasm since members will be planning the informal meetings. Of course there is the chance that the plan will backfire and no one will come to the informal meeting, since its not a "real" meeting. I don't think that is the case, and I'm willing to take that chance anyhow. As far as leadership goes, I feel I should take

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<sup>2</sup> This article is based on an email from Dan and is slightly edited to take it out of that context.

an even more active leadership role, using my age and energy as a motivator. That is what I plan to do. Things will be changing. I am all for a Club name change. We will have a new club name, and a separate club road name. Right now I am in favor of the "Eastern CT Model RR Club", and having our road name be the "New England Coast Line".

That would give the railroad a regional feel, while still making the railroad sound like a serious system with a sizeable amount of track and rolling stock. Our big passenger name trains could be The Pilgrim, or the Charter Oak, or something of that nature. I also have ideas for promoting the name change through the sale of a limited edition set of 3 boxcars, one a painted out M-P car, one lettered for the new road, but with M-P colors, and one car painted in the full new club scheme. This would be unique, and would be a perfect visual reminder of the change.

I think the club colors should be Dark Blue and White (NOT CONRAIL BLUE). The blue would be similar to Montana rail links' blue. Above all, these colors will look great on all the new club apparel. I also wouldn't be against printing 75 new hats for the club members if and when we go ahead with the name change.

The passenger module is our own version of Boston's big dig. I am planning on suspending passenger station work sessions for 3 months after Springfield, and moving work session back to Larry's to work on some of the other club modules, and to run some trains at Larry's. I can tell by looking at Larry that he misses us. Since many of us are working on pieces of and buildings for the passenger station module at home, progress will not completely stop. Along these lines, I have compiled a list of work items for each club module in need of repair and the approximate budget for this work.

I have found in my short but productive model building career that the best thing for a big project is to sometimes leave it for a

while, and crank out a few small projects to get the juices flowing again, and to remember the feeling of actually finishing something.

The passenger module is going to be an awesome showpiece, and a focal point for the layout, but I feel we will do a better job finishing it if we took some time to reenergize.

I have many other thoughts and observations, but that'll do for now. If anyone has any feedback, feel free to give me a shout. Remember, we're still one the biggest and best clubs around, so in a time of self criticism, there is still plenty to be proud of.

### Vice President's Niche

I will save my comments for next month, in view of the Prez's contribution.

### The Market Place

#### Club Member Ads

Advertise (free) here to reach more than seventy model railroaders eagerly waiting to buy your wonderful stuff.

Editor's Note: Let me know when your item sells or when you want to stop running the advertisement.

#### The Club Store

##### The Storekeeper's Report

None

#### M&PMRR Officers & Functionaries

<b>The President</b>	Dan DeLany	860 643-9303
<b>Vice President</b>	John Waller	564-3114
<b>TreaSurer</b>	Gary Domer	848-0690
<b>Secretary</b>	George Harran	443-0707
<b>Storekeeper</b>	Larry Southwick	535-2996
<b>Bulk Purchases</b>	Bill Evans	267-9482
<b>Meeting Speakers</b>	Bill Evans	267-9482
<b>Layouts/Name Tags</b>	Stu Dom	536-7637
<b>New Passenger Module</b>	Stu Dom	536-7637
<b>Field Trips</b>	Jim DeLany	889-4029
<b>Newsletter</b>	John Waller	564-3114
<b>Club Web Page</b>	Jim Spavins	

## **The Technical Section**

Contributions are welcome. You can write about anything from prototype to model railroads. Scenery, electrical, bench work, model building and more are all of interest to the club members.

### **Model Railroad Calendar**

Springfield; February 7 & 8, setup Friday 6; loading to be determined.

Mystic Middle School; 6 or 13 March, to be advised.

*From the Nutmeg Flyer, November 2003*

Essex until January 11, 2004:  
Connecticut River Museum 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
Holiday Model Railroad Show; Main Street  
10 AM to 5 PM.

Providence December 6-7, 13-14, 20-21:  
Providence Northern Model Railroad Club  
Open House 95 Hathaway street 10 AM to 4  
PM.

Mattapoisett, MA, December 14:  
Rochester Boy Scout Troop 31 Model Train  
Show, Old Rochester Junior High School,  
10 AM to 4 PM.

### **This Month**

Work sessions will generally be held each Wednesday at Henry's. To check on a particular date, call Henry. Sessions start at 7 PM. Don't assume a session is being held; check first.

### **Submitting Newsletter Items**

Electronic versions are preferred so retyping is not necessary. E-mail enclosures can now be opened. Microsoft Word and other compatible word processing programs should be used. Send items to be published by E-mailing them to me at home at: [john.waller@snet.net](mailto:john.waller@snet.net), or snail-mail to 94 Glebas Road, Plainfield, CT 06374-1429. If

you do send something, it is a good idea to phone (860 564 3114) and say that you sent it. Say M&P newsletter article in the subject line. You can also put the items on a floppy disk in Microsoft Word and give it to me or mail it. The deadline for submissions is one week before the end of the month.

### **THE DARTMOUTH DERAILMENT**

A story by Richard Peifer; please see separate attachment; thanks Richard.



Lolek looks down benignly on the Club layouts in the foyer at St. Bernards